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## COMMENCEMENT DAY

FLORA J. COOKE

Commencement Day in the School is an event of real significance since at least half of the class, which in recent years has numbered about forty, have had no other school experience. For twelve or fifteen years this has been their school home. Always in this, their last year, the seniors are recognized as the leaders of the School, carrying a major share of the responsibility for its spirit, its standards in scholarship and conduct and for keeping alive its best traditions for all-round improvement and progress. Each senior becomes the big brother or sister of some grade, and each grade in turn is delighted to honor the seniors. During the year, the younger grades entertain them with some frolic or luncheon and there present them with a souvenir of their own making. In the older groups small, appropriate gifts are made for each senior, such as a college pennant, an illuminated quotation from the senior-class play, a book plate or a block print, and these are presented at Commencement Morning Exercises. They are the tangible expression of the interest and friendship which the entire School feels for the seniors who on this morning are changing from the eldest members of the School family to the youngest members of the School alumni.

The graduation exercises held in the regular morning-exercise time are very simple. Their general plan is illustrated in the following typical program.

### COMMENCEMENT DAY PROGRAM

- March, CORONATION ..... *Svendson*  
The Orchestra
- Largo, from THE NEW WORLD SYMPHONY ..... *Dvořák*  
The Orchestra
- Concerto: CAPRICCIOSO BRILLIANTE ..... *Mendelssohn*  
Miriam Ulrich, '28
- Address: LOYALTY .....  
Dr. Horace J. Bridges
- Songs: (a) WANDERER'S NIGHT SONG ..... *Schubert*  
(b) THE GUIDEPOST ..... *Schubert*  
Group of boys of the high school
- Gifts: Presented by pupils of fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades
- Songs: (a) VIRGIN'S SLUMBER SONG ..... *Max Reger*  
Senior sopranos

(b) CHORUS OF SERAPHIM.....	<i>Dubois</i>
Girls of the high school and eighth grade	
Recitative: Mary Sager, '28	
Semi-chorus: Group of senior sopranos	
Presentation of Certificates .....	
Miss Cooke	
The Cherubic Hymn, from THE RUSSIAN LITURGY.....	<i>Gretschaninoff</i>
Eighth to twelfth grade	
Recessional, MARCH FROM TANNHAUSER.....	<i>Wagner</i>
The Orchestra	

For many years the School-music fund has made it possible to have from ten to twenty members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for the occasion, and this with the singing of the five upper grades has lifted the whole program into a service of great beauty.

When the School was small a chief feature of the Commencement Exercise was the personal word which the principal gave to each member of the class in awarding him his school certificate. It was a sincere effort to make clear to each one the impression which he had made upon the School during his years among us—an entirely informal and sympathetic summary of each person's strengths and gifts as he had shown them to us, and a not too stern reference to certain tendencies which it might be well to try to overcome when entering a new, larger and less personally-interested community. Now, because of the larger numbers this more intimate "personal word" is no longer feasible, but its useful factors have been conserved in a series of small group luncheons to the seniors and in a graduation-day letter to each parent.

Commencement Day has always ended upon a lighter and more joyous note. Since 1901 there has been an evening graduation party which included parents and closest friends. For many years this was held in the home or garden of the founder of the School, Mrs. Emmons Blaine. Later the Faculty were the hosts at an evening dinner and party which followed. Recently the parents of the seniors have asked the privilege of making the Commencement Evening a happy farewell event in the lives of Parker graduates.

On the whole, Commencement Day is one of mixed emotions for all, but its inevitable sadness is mitigated by the fact that the Francis W. Parker School is to most boys and girls a school home to which they return as alumni, year after year, to share their joys and sorrows, always sure of a welcome and of an interest as sincere as that which they find in the homes of their parents.

We believe that in no small measure the feeling which unites us has been fostered through the years by the daily morning assembly in which they have learned to know and appreciate each other and which has offered to each an opportunity for his best creative expression.